

REMARKS

Of the 28 original claims, claims 12-16 and 26-28 have been withdrawn in a previous communication. With this response, claims 1-11 and 17-25 are now pending.

Applicant does not believe that any fees are due at this time. However, should any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 to 1.21 be required for any reason relating to this document, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from Locke Liddell & Sapp LLP Deposit Account No. 12-1322, referencing matter number 021961-022US.

I. Restriction

For the convenience of the Examiner, and clarity of purpose, Applicant has reprinted selected portions of the substance of the Office Action in *10-point bolded and italicized font* (although not necessarily in the same order). Applicant's arguments immediately follow in regular font.

Applicant's election with traverse of claims 1-11 and 17-25 in response/amendment submitted on 10/11/05 is acknowledged the traversal is on the ground(s) that at least search claim 1 is generic to all other inventions. The applicant does not provide specifics as how or on what basis claim 1 is generic to other inventions since claim 1 with respect to other cited inventions have at least one limitation that is not cited in other independent claims and vice versa—claim 1 is directed to including a latch pull movably engaged with the connector body; wherein moving the latch pull relative to the connector body unlocks the latch from the receptacle; while claim 12 is directed to a connector including means for coupling the connector body with a receptacle by pushing the coupling means toward the receptacle; and while claim 13 is directed to a connector including a means for decoupling the connector body from a receptacle by pulling the decoupling means away from the receptacle. The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner and Applicant maintains the contention that Claim 1 is generic to all embodiments disclosed in the application. However, Applicant has elected to prosecute the species covered by claims 1-11 and 17-25.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-11 and 17-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,224,268 to Manning, et al. (hereinafter “Manning”).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner that Manning renders the pending claims obvious, and traverses this rejection. Manning does not suggest combining the teachings with any other reference in a manner. According to MPEP § 706.02(j), for a claim to be obvious, there must be a) a suggestion or motivation to combine reference teachings, b) a reasonable expectation of success, and c) the references must teach all of the claim limitations, *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991). The Examiner has not identified any teaching or suggestion within Manning for providing all of the claim limitations for pending claims 1-11 and 17-25, in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Specifically, Manning does not disclose or teach the mechanism of decoupling the connector recited in Claim 1 and Claim 17. Claim 1 states “wherein moving the latch pull relative to the connector body decouples the latch from the receptacle” and claim 17 states “wherein moving the latch pull away from the receptacle decouples the latch from the receptacle.” In both claims, decoupling of the connector is accomplished through the movement of the latch pull relative to the connector body. Stated another way, as the specification of the application notes “A latch pull mechanism is provided such that *movement of the latch pull*

relative to the connector body acts to decouple the latch mechanism, and thus the fiber optic connector, from a fiber optic receptacle.” Page 14, lines 6-8 (emphasis added).

This mechanism is neither disclosed, taught, nor even suggested in Manning. In fact, Manning specifically describes latching mechanisms with the type of shortcomings which Applicant’s invention addresses and overcomes. Decoupling a latching mechanism as described by Manning is accomplished through pressure activation of the latch by a user either with his hand or a tool. This is specifically exemplified by Manning when describing the manner of decoupling/disengaging required by the user, necessitating the exertion of pressure on the latch itself in order to effect disengagement. For example Manning states:

To disengage this embodiment of the high profile plug housing 22 from the receptacle 26, the user presses on a deflector 132 on the beam 74 which causes the beam 74 to flex and move toward the extending portion top surface 60. Once the protrusion 76 is completely disengaged from the retention aperture 78, the plug housing 22 can be easily and freely pulled out of the receptacle 26.(Manning at col. 6, ll. 49-55; *see also* Figs. 3 and 4).

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To disengage this embodiment of the high profile plug housing 22a from the receptacle 26, the user presses on the first portion 108 of the beam 74a which causes the beam 74a to flex and move toward the extending portion top surface 60a. The first portion 108 has a plurality of raised protuberances 114 against which a user's thumb, finger, or equivalent tool can engage. Once the protrusion 76a is completely disengaged from the retention aperture 78, the plug housing 22a can be easily and freely pulled out of the receptacle 26. (Manning at col. 7, l. 66 – col. 8, l. 8; *see also* Figs. 5 and 6).

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To disengage the low profile plug housing 22b from the receptacle 26b, the user presses on the second portion 122 of the beam 74b which causes the beam 74b to flex and move toward the top surface 60b of the extending portion 46b. Once the beam 74b is flexed sufficiently toward the top surface 60b, the retention protrusions 78b completely disengage from within the notches 76b

and the plug housing 22b can be easily and freely pulled out of the receptacle 26b. (Manning at col. 9, ll. 28-35; *see also* Figs. 7 and 8).

Applicants present application recognizes the shortcomings in this type of release mechanism, and specifically addresses it as follows:

“Although advertised as easily removable by using only the tip of the finger on the latching mechanism, this in reality is only true when the connector is relatively unobstructed. To achieve the maximum packing configurations for which the connector was designed to achieve, it is far more difficult and perhaps impossible for an operator to remove a connector in a high density installation without grasping the connector body and latch, or by using some other tool to depress the latch.” (Page 4, ll. 16-21).

Therefore, as evidenced above, Manning fails to disclose, teach or suggest at least the element of Claims 1 and 17 wherein the movement of the pull latch alone relative to the connector acts to decouple the latch.

Consequently, because Manning does not teach all of the claim limitations for pending independent claims 1 and 17, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 1 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 2-11 and 18-25 have also been rejected over the teachings of Manning.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 2-11 and 18-25. Because claims 2-11 are dependent upon claim 1, and claims 18-25 are dependent upon claim 17, and because applicant contends that claims 1 and 17 are patentable over Manning as originally submitted, no amendment is made herein to these claims.

Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 1-11 and 17-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

II. Citation of Relevant Art

Prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. In accordance with MPEP 707.05 the following references are pertinent in rejection of this application since they provide substantially the same information disclosure as this patent does. These references are:

6076974	Carlisle et al.
6024498 A	Carlisle; Arthur Wallace et al.
5638474 A	Lampert; Norman R. et al.
6491542 A	Zerebilov
Myer et al.	6422887
Kozuka et al.	4989622
Kinkade et al.	3796987

These references are cited herein to show the relevance of the apparatus/methods taught within these references as prior art.

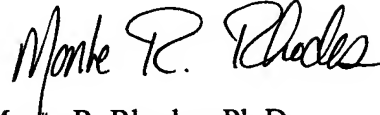
Applicant does not accede to the Examiner's characterization of the above-cited references. Further, since the Examiner has not used these references in forming a substantive rejection of the currently pending claims, Applicant reserves the right to make comment at such later time as is necessary.

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In light of the above remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested. Applicant reserves the right to subsequently take up prosecution of the claims originally filed in this application in continuation, continuation-in-part, and/or divisional applications.

The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned should any further action be required for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



Monte R. Rhodes, Ph.D.

Reg. No. 54,396

Customer No. 26720

AGENT FOR ASSIGNEE,
EMERSON ELECTRIC CO.

Locke Liddell & Sapp LLP
3400 JPMorgan Chase Tower
600 Travis Street
Houston, TX 77002-3095
Tel: (713) 226-1326

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